**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT
FOR NEW AND BEGINNING TEACHERS**

UNMOTIVATED STUDENTS

SEGMENT #2: OVERCOMING THE MYTHS OF MOTIVATION

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The Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute

L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs

Richmond, Virginia

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT
FOR
NEW AND BEGINNING TEACHERS

A project administered by

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Professional Development Toolkit for
New and Beginning Teachers

The PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT FOR NEW AND BEGINNING TEACHERS is a research-based video streamed program with accompanying resource documents. The program is an outgrowth of a previous Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute (CEPI) online mentoring study at Virginia Commonwealth University. The findings of the online mentoring study revealed twelve topics new and beginning teachers felt additional university training would have led them to more effective use of best practices in the classroom. In this program, each of the twelve topics is presented in two to six stand alone video segments. The total number of segments is forty five. Suggested uses, in addition to personal viewing by K-12 teachers for self improvement, include professional development, mentor and mentee, university prospective teacher, and small or large group training.

The facilitators are university faculty and practitioners with field experience. Each is currently involved in teacher training or serves as a staff development administrator. All are currently engaged in educational research, teaching and/or educational policy development.

The teachers in the video programs are classroom teachers. Some of them were participants in the 2006 Online Mentoring Study in which the topics for this project were identified. They represent all disciplines in K-12 grades.

Resource documents for the programs are provided as PDF files to facilitate the use of the 45 video segments. The first set of documents is composed of: (1) a description of the project, (2) an introduction to program facilitators, including a definition of each topic, and a list of the video segments, and (3) a research formative study summary that helped to guide the project's development. The second set of documents is composed of: (1) a description of the project, (2) a full text transcript for each video segment, (3) a set of problems and solutions related to each video segment in the form of a work-study guide, and (4) an annotated bibliographic summary of references and Internet links for each transcript. Many of the organizations and agencies referenced in the transcripts are actively involved in the development of video and professional development presentations that support policy and advocacy.

Every reasonable effort is made to present current and accurate information. Internet content, however, does appear, disappear and change over time. CEPI, as a university-based educational policy research institute endorses no specific position of any listed group.

TIME MANAGEMENT

SEGMENT #2: OVERCOMING THE MYTHS OF MOTIVATION

🗀 VIDEO SEGMENT TRANSCRIPT

Unmotivated Students: Knowledge and understanding of students who are disruptive, non-participatory or have no desire to learn.

Facilitator: Dr. Loraine Stewart, Associate Professor
Department of Teaching and Learning
School of Education
Virginia Commonwealth University

AUDIO	VIDEO
According to world renowned consultant and *F.A.T. City* author, Richard Lavoie, most teachers and parents adhere to many misconceptions regarding motivation. My name is Loraine Stewart. Associate Professor, Teaching and learning, Virginia Commonwealth University. Today I would like to share some suggestions for motivating students who appear to be unmotivated. In this segment, we focus on strategies to overcome myths about motivation. In his book, *The Motivation Breakthrough: 6 Secrets to Turning on the Tuned-Out Child,* Lavoie identifies five myths about motivation that he feels need to be eliminated in order for educators to be more receptive to new motivation approaches. The five myths are: - Nothing motivates some students - Motivation is not constant - Rewards and incentives are effective motivators - Competition is the great motivator - Punishment is an effective motivator Lavoie encourages teachers to realize that these are myths because: ▪ All human behavior is motivated by something. We might not get the response we want from a student but that does not mean he was not motivated. It just means that he was motivated to respond differently than we expected or he was motivated to do something else. ▪ Motivation is consider a relative constant in the field of psychology; therefore, if a student is motivated by a particular stimulus on one day chances are they will be motivated by it the next. He used the example of math by stating a student who is motivated to learn math, is motivated to learn it all the time versus some days he is motivated to learn math and other days he is not.	**DR. STEWART**

- Rewards and incentives are extrinsic motivators; therefore, they are temporary. Usually, once the reward or incentive is gone so is the behavior. As educators, our goal is to inspire children to be intrinsically motivated so the desire will be long lasting versus temporary. We want our students to want to learn because of personal satisfaction, not to receive a reward. This does not mean we should eliminate extrinsic motivators but we should not rely too heavily on them.

- Healthy competition in a classroom can be fun but it is important for teachers to realize that the only people who are motivated by competition are the ones who believe they can win. Students who have a learned helplessness mentality don't believe they can win; therefore, probably won't be motivated by the competition.

- Punishment is another extrinsic method of motivation that is usually only effective when it is being administered. When the punishment is removed the desire to exhibit the desired behavior does also.

Let's hear a response to the myths and the counter to them from teachers.

1. Nothing motivates some students:

My name is Willie Cline. I am an Electricity Instructor in a high school Technical Center. There is something that motivates every one of us! It's up to me as a teacher to find ways to motivate my students. For some students, this may a challenge!

WILLIE CLINE

2. Motivation is not consistent

Motivation doesn't have to be consistent. Sometimes all it takes is a little coaxing to get a student involved, and every situation is different. I have learned quickly that what motivates one student in one situation may not motivate that same student in the next. A teacher has to know students and understand what makes them want to do or not to do something!

3. Rewards and incentives are effective motivators

I agree that rewards and incentives are effective in the real world and in the classroom. In the real world, we have rewards and incentives, such as paychecks and bonuses. Now I'm not saying to reward students with money, but some sort of reward such as a homework pass or an opportunity to work in groups can definitely be a way to help motivate some students.

4. Punishment is a great motivator

I have found that positive reinforcement works the best for me. I can build my students' confidence by telling them what they did right instead of always telling them what they have done wrong. When done correctly, I have learned that most students will continue to work on the things they need improvement on without feeling I am degrading them.

5. Competition is a Great Motivator

I am convinced that this all depends on the student. Some students thrive on the competition aspect while others shy away from it. Depending on student preferences, competition can either unite or divide students.

| | JERMAINE HARGROVE |

My name is Jermaine Hargrove. I am a Health and Physical Education Middle School teacher. I have taught for 1 year; and I am now in my second year of teaching.

Motivation myths often quoted by educators and others who work with students deal with negatives that interfere with the development of good motivation techniques both in the regular c and sports classroom. Myths such as: 1.) some students cannot be motivated, 2.) rewards and incentives are the foundation for learning, 3.) punishment motivates, and 4.) competition is the greatest motivator, are performance deterrents. As a physical education teacher, I knew in my first year of teaching that I had to gain control early by creating a well-managed, caring and supportive place where everyone is valued and respected, a place where individual differences are recognized in academic and physical performance. Use of teams, for example, has been critical to individual motivation through group activity. Well-planned teams with short-term goals elevated feelings of self-accomplishment, and heightened awareness and appreciation for the skills of others. This is especially true for students who saw learning as drudgery. Through teaming, unmotivated students soon recognized their role in ensuring the success of a team. Last year, my perceived successes with unmotivated learners caused colleagues to seek information about my techniques. I tell them that I am still learning more about my beliefs and the myths that negatively impact our students and their learning.

The two teachers you have just heard have been very specific about their beliefs as they relate to motivation myths. Have you thought about them? How strongly do you feel about their elimination?

| | DR. STEWART |

📂 PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Unmotivated Students: Knowledge and understanding of students who are disruptive, non-participatory or have not desire to learn.

Ask yourself: What strategies do you use to motivate your classes? How do you work with individual students who lack motivation?

Suggested use for this module:

1. Analyze:

Please select one of the scenarios below and problem-solve a list of possible solutions. Record your ideas in the space provided. Discuss these ideas with your other educators (mentor, colleagues, or other beginning teachers).

2. View:

Watch the corresponding video on this topic. How does this information change your ideas?

3. Compare:

Revisit the scenario selected. Next, review the section entitled, "Possible Solutions" comparing the ideas listed with your own list.

4. Reflect:

How will you apply this new information to your current or future classroom? What goal will you set to help you begin to change your practices? What support is needed to help you accomplish this goal?

5. Apply:

List the first step towards change below. Create a timeline for success and place deadlines in your personal planner as a reminder. How will you know when you have met your goals?

Scenarios 1 & 2: Unmotivated Students

Scenario 1

Sandra is in 11th grade. She comes to class late and puts in the least amount of effort possible to complete her work. After brainstorming some ideas in the classroom, students are given a homework assignment to choose a topic for the upcoming research-projects. The other students are excited about the chance to choose what they will analyze and are chatting about the assignment. However, Sandra comes to class and puts her head down. How would you intervene with Sandra?

Scenario 2

Things have been going well in your classroom this year. As time goes along, your students are improving on their assessments and are demonstrating use of greater problem-solving skills. During the last couple of weeks, things have been feeling rushed and the students seem less interested during whole-group instruction. What would you do to improve the motivation of this class?

<div align="center">

Circle the scenario that you selected below:

Scenario 1   Scenario 2

</div>

Record a list of your own possible solutions here:

Summary & Goal Setting:

<div align="center">

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

</div>

- **Motivate your learners through:**

    o   Surprise (Teacher Communication: You are not going to believe what happens when I drop these objects. One is heavy and one is light. Which do you think will land first? Why?)

    o   High Expectations (Teacher Communication: You were successful with the class reading assignment yesterday because you used comprehension strategies to help you solve difficult

words. As you read today, I am sure that using context clues will allow you to better understand the author's meaning.)

- o Giving Appropriate Praise (Younger students respond well to public approval. Older students may be embarrassed by public acknowledgement but respond well to more private praise (letter home, certificate, comments at the classroom door).

- o Demonstrating Caring (Teacher Actions: Smile as you stand by the classroom door and greet students. Show interest in their personal lives by asking about significant events. Really listen.) Never use humiliation or sarcasm with students. Always be a strong role model.

- o Questioning with Hints (Teacher Communication: What two factors caused the great depression? Hint or Prompt: Think about what was happening with banks in the United States and Europe.)

- o Showing Pride (Teacher Actions: Display student work and show off individual, group, and class accomplishments, Know and use student names)

- o Noticing changes and improvements (Teacher Actions: Point out changes across time so that the children see how effort leads to success, Encourage quality workmanship)

- o Pictures, graphs, cartoons (Teacher Actions: Show your visual and encourage students to think about commonalities or connections with the topic of study)

- o Using authentic tasks (Teacher Actions: Utilize real-life objects, games, and hands-on learning to introduce new concepts during instruction)

Intrinsic motivation begins with the student and the interests he or she already has about the topic of study. Extrinsic motivation focuses on cognitive strategies and incentives for reinforcing learning. Remember to use both types of motivation to captivate the interest of your students. Lastly, don't overuse tangible rewards (stickers, candy, prizes) or they will lose their effectiveness.

🗁 ANNOTATED RESEARCH BIBLIOGRAPHY

❖ Undergraduate majors tend to think of effective motivators as being extrinsic (prizes, stickers, free time, candy) in nature rather than more intrinsic (choice, autonomy, challenge) in nature.

> Hicks, Cathy D.; Glasgow, Neal A. & McNary Sarah J. (2005) What successful mentors do. CA: Corwin Press. 8(42).

❖ Educators can and do affect students' level of engagement in learning. Simply recognizing this power is a critical step in motivating students. By further recognizing that a healthy self-esteem is the foundation for success, which in turn fosters motivation and engagement in school, teachers can see the connections between their practice and student outcomes.

> Brewster, C., & Fager, J. (2000). *Increasing student engagement and motivation: from time-on-task to homework*. Retrieved October 22, 2007, from
> http://www.nwrel.org/request/oct00/textonly.html#conclusion

❖ A greater understanding of motivational issues would empower the new teacher with a better understanding of the factors that maximize the motivational potential of the classroom-teaching-learning environment.

> Hicks, Cathy; Glasgow, Neal & McNary Sarah. (2005). What successful mentors do. CA: Corwin Press. P. 40.

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